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# POEMS

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

**1914, and other Poems**

SEVENTH IMPRESSION

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# P O E M S

BY

RUPERT BROOKE

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1908—1911



## SONNET

OH ! Death will find me, long before I tire  
Of watching you; and swing me suddenly  
Into the shade and loneliness and mire  
Of the last land ! There, waiting patiently,

One day, I think, I'll feel a cool wind blowing,  
See a slow light across the Stygian tide,  
And hear the Dead about me stir, unknowing,  
And tremble. And *I* shall know that you have died,

And watch you, a broad-browed and smiling dream,  
Pass, light as ever, through the lightless host,  
Quietly ponder, start, and sway, and gleam—  
Most individual and bewildering ghost !—

And turn, and toss your brown delightful head  
Amusedly, among the ancient Dead.

## SONNET

I SAID I splendidly loved you ; it's not true.

Such long swift tides stir not a land-locked sea.  
On gods or fools the high risk falls—on you—

The clean clear bitter-sweet that's not for me.  
Love soars from earth to ecstasies unwist.

Love is flung Lucifer-like from Heaven to Hell.  
But—there are wanderers in the middle mist,

Who cry for shadows, clutch, and cannot tell  
Whether they love at all, or, loving, whom :

An old song's lady, a fool in fancy dress,  
Or phantoms, or their own face on the gloom ;

For love of Love, or from heart's loneliness.  
Pleasure's not theirs, nor pain. They doubt, and  
sigh,

And do not love at all. Of these am I.

## SUCCESS

I THINK if you had loved me when I wanted ;  
If I'd looked up one day, and seen your eyes,  
And found my wild sick blasphemous prayer  
granted,  
And your brown face, that's full of pity and  
wise,  
Flushed suddenly ; the white godhead in new fear  
Intolerably so struggling, and so shamed ;  
Most holy and far, if you'd come all too near,  
If earth had seen Earth's lordliest wild limbs  
tamed,  
Shaken, and trapped, and shivering, for *my*  
touch—  
Myself should I have slain ? or that foul you ?  
But this the strange gods, who had given so much,  
To have seen and known you, this they might  
not do.  
One last shame's spared me, one black word's  
unspoken ;  
And I'm alone ; and you have not awoken.



## DUST

WHEN the white flame in us is gone,  
And we that lost the world's delight  
Stiffen in darkness, left alone  
To crumble in our separate night ;

When your swift hair is quiet in death,  
And through the lips corruption thrust  
Has stilled the labour of my breath—  
When we are dust, when we are dust !—

Not dead, not undesirous yet,  
Still sentient, still unsatisfied,  
We'll ride the air, and shine, and flit,  
Around the places where we died,

And dance as dust before the sun,  
And light of foot, and unconfined,  
Hurry from road to road, and run  
About the errands of the wind.

And every mote, on earth or air,  
Will speed and gleam, down later days,  
And like a secret pilgrim fare  
By eager and invisible ways,

Nor ever rest, nor ever lie,  
Till, beyond thinking, out of view,  
One mote of all the dust that's I  
Shall meet one atom that was you.

Then in some garden hushed from wind,  
Warm in a sunset's afterglow,  
The lovers in the flowers will find  
A sweet and strange unquiet grow

Upon the peace ; and, past desiring,  
So high a beauty in the air,  
And such a light, and such a quiring,  
And such a radiant ecstasy there,

They'll know not if it's fire, or dew,  
Or out of earth, or in the height,  
Singing, or flame, or scent, or hue,  
Or two that pass, in light, to light,

Out of the garden, higher, higher. . . .  
But in that instant they shall learn  
The shattering ecstasy of our fire,  
And the weak passionless hearts will burn

And faint in that amazing glow,  
Until the darkness close above ;  
And they will know—poor fools, they'll know!—  
One moment, what it is to love.

## KINDLINESS

WHEN love has changed to kindness—  
Oh, love, our hungry lips, that press  
So tight that Time's an old god's dream  
Nodding in heaven, and whisper stuff  
Seven million years were not enough  
To think on after, make it seem  
Less than the breath of children playing,  
A blasphemy scarce worth the saying,  
A sorry jest, "When love has grown  
To kindness—to kindness!" . . .  
And yet—the best that either's known  
Will change, and wither, and be less,  
At last, than comfort, or its own  
Remembrance. And when some caress  
Tendered in habit (once a flame  
All heaven sang out to) wakes the shame  
Unworded, in the steady eyes  
We'll have,—*that* day, what shall we do?  
Being so noble, kill the two  
Who've reached their second-best? Being wise,  
Break cleanly off, and get away,  
Follow down other windier skies  
New lures, alone? Or shall we stay,  
Since this is all we've known, content  
In the lean twilight of such day,  
And not remember, not lament?  
That time when all is over, and  
Hand never flinches, brushing hand;

And blood lies quiet, for all you're near ;  
And it's but spoken words we hear,  
Where trumpets sang ; when the mere skies  
Are stranger and nobler than your eyes ;  
And flesh is flesh, was flame before ;  
And infinite hungers leap no more  
In the chance swaying of your dress ;  
And love has changed to kindliness.

## MUMMIA

As those of old drank mummia  
To fire their limbs of lead,  
Making dead kings from Africa  
Stand pandar to their bed ;

Drunk on the dead, and medicined  
With spiced imperial dust,  
In a short night they reeled to find  
Ten centuries of lust.

So I, from paint, stone, tale, and rhyme,  
Stuffed love's infinity,  
And sucked all lovers of all time  
To rarify ecstasy.

Helen's the hair shuts out from me  
Verona's livid skies ;  
Gypsy the lips I press ; and see  
Two Antonys in your eyes.

The unheard invisible lovely dead  
Lie with us in this place,  
And ghostly hands above my head  
Close face to straining face ;

Their blood is wine along our limbs ;  
Their whispering voices wreathe  
Savage forgotten drowsy hymns  
Under the names we breathe ;

Woven from their tomb, and one with it,  
The night wherein we press ;  
Their thousand pitchy pyres have lit  
Your flaming nakedness.

For the uttermost years have cried and clung  
To kiss your mouth to mine ;  
And hair long dust was caught, was flung,  
Hand shaken to hand divine,

And Life has fired, and Death not shaded,  
All Time's uncounted bliss,  
And the height o' the world has flamed and faded,—  
Love, that our love be this !

## THE FISH

IN a cool curving world he lies  
And ripples with dark ecstasies.  
The kind luxurious lapse and steal  
Shapes all his universe to feel  
And know and be ; the clinging stream  
Closes his memory, glooms his dream,  
Who lips the roots o' the shore, and glides  
Superb on unreturning tides.  
Those silent waters weave for him  
A fluctuant mutable world and dim,  
Where wavering masses bulge and gape  
Mysterious, and shape to shape  
Dies momentarily through whorl and hollow,  
And form and line and solid follow  
Solid and line and form to dream  
Fantastic down the eternal stream ;  
An obscure world, a shifting world,  
Bulbous, or pulled to thin, or curled,  
Or serpentine, or driving arrows,  
Or serene slidings, or March narrows.  
There slipping wave and shore are one,  
And weed and mud. No ray of sun,  
But glow to glow fades down the deep  
(As dream to unknown dream in sleep) ;  
Shaken translucency illumines  
The hyaline of drifting glooms ;  
The strange soft-handed depth subdues  
Drowned colour there, but black to hues,

As death to living, decomposes—  
Red darkness of the heart of roses,  
Blue brilliant from dead starless skies,  
And gold that lies behind the eyes,  
The unknown unnameable sightless white  
That is the essential flame of night,  
Lustreless purple, hooded green,  
The myriad hues that lie between  
Darkness and darkness ! . . .

And all's one,  
Gentle, embracing, quiet, dun,  
The world he rests in, world he knows,  
Perpetual curving. Only—grows  
An eddy in that ordered falling,  
A knowledge from the gloom, a calling  
Weed in the wave, gleam in the mud—  
The dark fire leaps along his blood ;  
Dateless and deathless, blind and still,  
The intricate impulse works its will ;  
His woven world drops back ; and he,  
Sans providence, sans memory,  
Unconscious and directly driven,  
Fades to some dank sufficient heaven.

O world of lips, O world of laughter,  
Where hope is fleet and thought flies after,  
Of lights in the clear night, of cries  
That drift along the wave and rise  
Thin to the glittering stars above,  
You know the hands, the eyes of love !



The strife of limbs, the sightless clinging,  
The infinite distance, and the singing  
Blown by the wind, a flame of sound,  
The gleam, the flowers, and vast around  
The horizon, and the heights above—  
You know the sigh, the song of love !

But there the night is close, and there  
Darkness is cold and strange and bare ;  
And the secret deeps are whisperless ;  
And rhythm is all deliciousness ;  
And joy is in the throbbing tide,  
Whose intricate fingers beat and glide  
In felt bewildering harmonies  
Of trembling touch ; and music is  
The exquisite knocking of the blood.  
Space is no more, under the mud ;  
His bliss is older than the sun.  
Silent and straight the waters run.  
The lights, the cries, the willows dim,  
And the dark tide are one with him.

## THOUGHTS ON THE SHAPE OF THE HUMAN BODY

How can we find ? how can we rest ? how can  
We, being gods, win joy, or peace, being man ?  
We, the gaunt zanies of a witless Fate,  
Who love the unloving, and the lover hate,  
Forget the moment ere the moment slips,  
Kiss with blind lips that seek beyond the lips,  
Who want, and know not what we want, and  
cry

With crooked mouths for Heaven, and throw it  
by.

Love's for completeness ! No perfection grows  
'Twixt leg, and arm, elbow, and ear, and nose,  
And joint, and socket ; but unsatisfied  
Sprawling desires, shapeless, perverse, denied.  
Finger with finger wreathes ; we love, and gape,  
Fantastic shape to mazed fantastic shape,  
Stragglings, irregular, perplexed, embossed,  
Grotesquely twined, extravagantly lost  
By crescent paths and strange protuberant ways  
From sanity and from wholeness and from grace.  
How can love triumph, how can solace be,  
Where fever turns toward fever, knee toward  
knee ?

Could we but fill to harmony, and dwell  
Simple as our thought and as perfectible,  
Rise disentangled from humanity  
Strange whole and new into simplicity,

Grow to a radiant round love, and bear  
Unfluctuant passion for some perfect sphere,  
Love moon to moon unquestioning, and be  
Like the star Lunisequa, steadfastly  
Following the round clear orb of her delight,  
Patiently ever, through the eternal night !

## FLIGHT

Voices out of the shade that cried,  
And long noon in the hot calm places,  
And children's play by the wayside,  
And country eyes, and quiet faces—  
All these were round my steady paces.

Those that I could have loved went by me ;  
Cool gardened homes slept in the sun ;  
I heard the whisper of water nigh me,  
Saw hands that beckoned, shone, were gone  
In the green and gold. And I went on.

For if my echoing footfall slept,  
Soon a far whispering there'd be  
Of a little lonely wind that crept  
From tree to tree, and distantly  
Followed me, followed me. . . .

But the blue vaporous end of day  
Brought peace, and pursuit baffled quite,  
Where between pine-woods dipped the way.  
I turned, slipped in and out of sight.  
I trod as quiet as the night.

The pine-boles kept perpetual hush ;  
And in the boughs wind never swirled.  
I found a flowering lowly bush,  
And bowed, slid in, and sighed and curled,  
Hidden at rest from all the world.

Safe! I was safe, and glad, I knew!  
Yet—with cold heart and cold wet brows  
I lay. And the dark fell. . . . There grew  
Meward a sound of shaken boughs;  
And ceased, above my intricate house;

And silence, silence, silence found me. . . .  
I felt the unfaltering movement creep  
Among the leaves. They shed around me  
Calm clouds of scent, that I did weep;  
And stroked my face. I fell asleep.

## THE HILL

BREATHLESS, we flung us on the windy hill,  
    Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.  
    You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;  
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,  
When we are old, are old. . . ." "And when  
    we die  
All's over that is ours; and life burns on  
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,  
—"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is  
    won!"

"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.  
    Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we  
    said;  
    "We shall go down with unreluctant tread  
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" . . . Proud  
    we were,  
And laughed, that had such brave true things to  
    say.  
—And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

## THE ONE BEFORE THE LAST

I DREAMT I was in love again  
With the One Before the Last,  
And smiled to greet the pleasant pain  
Of that innocent young past.

But I jumped to feel how sharp had been  
The pain when it did live,  
How the faded dreams of Nineteen-ten  
Were Hell in Nineteen-five.

The boy's woe was as keen and clear,  
The boy's love just as true,  
And the One Before the Last, my dear,  
Hurt quite as much as you.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sickly I pondered how the lover  
Wrongs the unanswering tomb,  
And sentimentalizes over  
What earned a better doom.

Gently he tombs the poor dim last time,  
Strews pinkish dust above,  
And sighs, "The dear dead boyish pastime!  
But *this*—ah, God!—is Love!"

—Better oblivion hide dead true loves,  
Better the night enfold,  
Than men, to eke the praise of new loves,  
Should lie about the old!

\* \* \* \* \*

Oh! bitter thoughts I had in plenty.  
But here's the worst of it—  
I shall forget, in Nineteen-twenty,  
*You* ever hurt a bit!



## THE JOLLY COMPANY

THE stars, a jolly company,  
I envied, straying late and lonely ;  
And cried upon their revelry :  
“ O white companionship ! You only  
In love, in faith unbroken dwell,  
Friends radiant and inseparable ! ”

Light-heart and glad they seemed to me  
And merry comrades (*even so  
God out of Heaven may laugh to see  
The happy crowds ; and never know  
That in his lone obscure distress  
Each walketh in a wilderness*).

But I, remembering, pitied well  
And loved them, who, with lonely light,  
In empty infinite spaces dwell,  
Disconsolate. For, all the night,  
I heard the thin gnat-voices cry,  
Star to faint star, across the sky.

## THE LIFE BEYOND

He wakes, who never thought to wake again,  
Who held the end was Death. He opens eyes  
Slowly, to one long livid oozing plain

Closed down by the strange eyeless heavens.

He lies ;

And waits ; and once in timeless sick surmise  
Through the dead air heaves up an unknown  
hand,

Like a dry branch. No life is in that land,

Himself not lives, but is a thing that cries ;

An unmeaning point upon the mud ; a speck

Of moveless horror ; an Immortal One

Cleansed of the world, sentient and dead ; a fly

Fast-stuck in grey sweat on a corpse's neck.

I thought when love for you died, I should die.

It's dead. Alone, most strangely, I live on.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE BELIEF  
THAT THE ANCIENT ROMAN  
FESTIVAL OF THE DEAD WAS  
CALLED AMBARVALIA

SWINGS the way still by hollow and hill,  
And all the world's a song ;  
"She's far," it sings me, "but fair," it rings me,  
"Quiet," it laughs, "and strong !"

Oh ! spite of the miles and years between us,  
Spite of your chosen part,  
I do remember ; and I go  
With laughter in my heart.

So above the little folk that know not,  
Out of the white hill-town,  
High up I clamber ; and I remember ;  
And watch the day go down.

Gold is my heart, and the world's golden,  
And one peak tipped with light ;  
And the air lies still about the hill  
With the first fear of night ;

Till mystery down the soundless valley  
Thunders, and dark is here ;  
And the wind blows, and the light goes,  
And the night is full of fear.

And I know, one night, on some far height,  
In the tongue I never knew,  
I yet shall hear the tidings clear  
From them that were friends of you.

They'll call the news from hill to hill,  
Dark and uncomforted,  
Earth and sky and the winds ; and I  
Shall know that you are dead.

I shall not hear your trentals,  
Nor eat your arval bread ;  
For the kin of you will surely do  
Their duty by the dead.

Their little dull greasy eyes will water ;  
They'll paw you, and gulp afresh.  
They'll sniffle and weep, and their thoughts  
will creep  
Like flies on the cold flesh.

They will put pence on your grey eyes,  
Bind up your fallen chin,  
And lay you straight, the fools that loved you  
Because they were your kin.

They will praise all the bad about you,  
And hush the good away,  
And wonder how they'll do without you,  
And then they'll go away.

But quieter than one sleeping,  
And stranger than of old,  
You will not stir for weeping,  
You will not mind the cold;

But through the night the lips will laugh not,  
The hands will be in place,  
And at length the hair be lying still  
About the quiet face.

With snuffle and sniff and handkerchief,  
And dim and decorous mirth,  
With ham and sherry, they'll meet to bury  
The lordliest lass of earth.

The little dead hearts will tramp ungrieving  
Behind lone-riding you,  
The heart so high, the heart so living,  
Heart that they never knew.

I shall not hear your trentals,  
Nor eat your arval bread,  
Nor with smug breath tell lies of death  
To the unanswering dead.

With snuffle and sniff and handkerchief,  
The folk who loved you not  
Will bury you, and go wondering  
Back home. And you will rot.

But laughing and half-way up to heaven,  
With wind and hill and star,  
I yet shall keep, before I sleep,  
Your Ambarvalia.

## DEAD MEN'S LOVE

THERE was a damned successful Poet ;  
There was a Woman like the Sun.  
And they were dead. They did not know it.  
They did not know their time was done.  
They did not know his hymns  
Were silence ; and her limbs,  
That had served Love so well,  
Dust, and a filthy smell.

And so one day, as ever of old,  
Hands out, they hurried, knee to knee ;  
On fire to cling and kiss and hold  
And, in the other's eyes, to see  
Each his own tiny face,  
And in that long embrace  
Feel lip and breast grow warm  
To breast and lip and arm.

So knee to knee they sped again,  
And laugh to laugh they ran, I'm told,  
Across the streets of Hell . . .

And then  
They suddenly felt the wind blow cold,  
And knew, so closely pressed,  
Chill air on lip and breast,  
And, with a sick surprise,  
The emptiness of eyes.

## TOWN AND COUNTRY

HERE, where love's stuff is body, arm and side  
Are stabbing-sweet 'gainst chair and lamp  
and wall.

In every touch more intimate meanings hide ;  
And flaming brains are the white heart of all.

Here, million pulses to one centre beat :  
Closed in by men's vast friendliness, alone,  
Two can be drunk with solitude, and meet  
On the sheer point where sense with knowing's  
one.

Here the green-purple clanging royal night,  
And the straight lines and silent walls of  
town,  
And roar, and glare, and dust, and myriad white  
Undying passers, pinnacle and crown

Intensest heavens between close-lying faces  
By the lamp's airless fierce ecstatic fire ;  
And we've found love in little hidden places,  
Under great shades, between the mist and  
mire.

Stay ! though the woods are quiet, and you've  
heard

Night creep along the hedges. Never go  
Where tangled foliage shrouds the crying bird,  
And the remote winds sigh, and waters flow !



Lest—as our words fall dumb on windless  
    noons,  
Or hearts grow hushed and solitary, beneath  
Unheeding stars and unfamiliar moons,  
Or boughs bend over, close and quiet as  
    death,—

Unconscious and unpassionate and still,  
    Cloud-like we lean and stare as bright leaves  
    stare,  
And gradually along the stranger hill  
    Our unvalled loves thin out on vacuous air,

And suddenly there's no meaning in our kiss,  
    And your lit upward face grows, where we lie,  
Lonelier and dreadfuller than sunlight is,  
    And dumb and mad and eyeless like the sky.

## PARALYSIS

For moveless limbs no pity I crave,  
That never were swift ! Still all I prize,  
Laughter and thought and friends, I have ;  
No fool to heave luxurious sighs  
For the woods and hills that I never knew.  
The more excellent way's yet mine ! And you  
Flower-laden come to the clean white cell,  
And we talk as ever—am I not the same ?  
With our hearts we love, immutable,  
You without pity, I without shame.  
We talk as of old ; as of old you go  
Out under the sky, and laughing, I know,  
Flit through the streets, your heart all me ;  
Till you gain the world beyond the town.  
Then—I fade from your heart, quietly ;  
And your fleet steps quicken. The strong down  
Smiles you welcome there ; the woods that  
love you  
Close lovely and conquering arms above you.  
O ever-moving, O lithe and free !  
Fast in my linen prison I press  
On impassable bars, or emptily  
Laugh in my great loneliness.  
And still in the white neat bed I strive  
Most impotently against that gyve ;  
Being less now than a thought, even,  
To you alone with your hills and heaven.

## MENELAUS AND HELEN

### I.

Hot through Troy's ruin Menelaus broke  
To Priam's palace, sword in hand, to sate  
On that adulterous whore a ten years' hate  
And a king's honour. Through red death, and  
    smoke,  
And cries, and then by quieter ways he strode,  
Till the still innermost chamber fronted him.  
He swung his sword, and crashed into the dim  
Luxurious bower, flaming like a god.

High sat white Helen, lonely and serene.  
He had not remembered that she was so fair,  
And that her neck curved down in such a way ;  
And he felt tired. He flung the sword away,  
And kissed her feet, and knelt before her there,  
The perfect Knight before the perfect Queen.

II.

So far the poet. How should he behold  
That journey home, the long connubial years?  
He does not tell you how white Helen bears  
Child on legitimate child, becomes a scold,  
Haggard with virtue. Menelaus bold  
Waxed garrulous, and sacked a hundred Troys  
'Twixt noon and supper. And her golden voice  
Got shrill as he grew deafer. And both were old.

Often he wonders why on earth he went  
Troyward, or why poor Paris ever came.  
Oft she weeps, gummy-eyed and impotent;  
Her dry shanks twitch at Paris' mumbled name.  
So Menelaus nagged, and Helen cried;  
And Paris slept on by Scamander side.

## LIBIDO

How should I know ? The enormous wheels of will  
Drove me cold-eyed on tired and sleepless feet.  
Night was void arms and you a phantom still,  
And day your far light swaying down the street.  
As never fool for love, I starved for you ;  
My throat was dry and my eyes hot to see.  
Your mouth so lying was most heaven in view,  
And your remembered smell most agony.

Love wakens love ! I felt your hot wrist shiver  
And suddenly the mad victory I planned  
Flashed real, in your burning bending head. . .  
My conqueror's blood was cool as a deep river  
In shadow ; and my heart beneath your hand  
Quieter than a dead man on a bed.

## JEALOUSY

WHEN I see you, who were so wise and cool,  
Gazing with silly sickness on that fool  
You've given your love to, your' adoring hands  
Touch his so intimately that each understands,  
I know, most hidden things; and when I know  
Your holiest dreams yield to the stupid bow  
Of his red lips, and that the empty grace  
Of those strong legs and arms, that rosy face,  
Has beaten your heart to such a flame of love,  
That you have given him every touch and move,  
Wrinkle and secret of you, all your life,  
—Oh! then I know I'm waiting, lover-wife,  
For the great time when love is at a close,  
And all its fruit's to watch the thickening nose  
And sweaty neck and dulling face and eye,  
That are yours, and you, most surely, till you  
die!

Day after day you'll sit with him and note  
The greasier tie, the dingy wrinkling coat;  
As prettiness turns to pomp, and strength to fat,  
And love, love, love to habit!

And after that,  
When all that's fine in man is at an end,  
And you, that loved young life and clean, must  
tend

A foul sick fumbling dribbling body and old,  
When his rare lips hang flabby and can't hold  
Slobber, and you're enduring that worst thing,  
Senility's queasy furtive love-making,

And searching those dear eyes for human  
    meaning,  
Propping the bald and helpless head, and  
    cleaning  
A scrap that life's flung by, and love's forgotten,—  
Then you'll be tired ; and passion dead and  
    rotten ;  
And he'll be dirty, dirty !

                                    O lithe and free  
And lightfoot, that the poor heart cries to see,  
That's how I'll see your man and you !—

                                    But you  
—Oh, when *that* time comes, you'll be dirty too !

## BLUE EVENING

My restless blood now lies a-quiver,  
Knowing that always, exquisitely,  
This April twilight on the river  
Stirs anguish in the heart of me.

For the fast world in that rare glimmer  
Puts on the witchery of a dream,  
The straight grey buildings, richly dimmer,  
The fiery windows, and the stream

With willows leaning quietly over,  
The still ecstatic fading skies . . .  
And all these, like a waiting lover,  
Murmur and gleam, lift lustrous eyes,

Drift close to me, and sideways bending  
Whisper delicious words.

But I  
Stretch terrible hands, uncomprehending,  
Shaken with love ; and laugh ; and cry.

My agony made the willows quiver ;  
I heard the knocking of my heart  
Die loudly down the windless river,  
I heard the pale skies fall apart,



And the shrill stars' unmeaning laughter,  
And my voice with the vocal trees  
Weeping. And Hatred followed after,  
Shrilling madly down the breeze.

In peace from the wild heart of clamour,  
A flower in moonlight, she was there,  
Was rippling down white ways of glamour  
Quietly laid on wave and air.

Her passing left no leaf a-quiver.  
Pale flowers wreathed her white, white  
brows.  
Her feet were silence on the river;  
And "Hush!" she said, between the boughs.

## THE CHARM

In darkness the loud sea makes moan ;  
And earth is shaken, and all evils creep  
About her ways.

Oh, now to know you sleep !  
Out of the whirling blinding moil, alone,  
Out of the slow grim fight,  
One thought to wing—to you, asleep,  
In some cool room that's open to the night,  
Lying half-forward, breathing quietly,  
One white hand on the white  
Unrumped sheet, and the ever-moving hair  
Quiet and still at length ! . . .

Your magic and your beauty and your strength,  
Like hills at noon or sunlight on a tree,  
Sleeping prevail in earth and air.

In the sweet gloom above the brown and white  
Night benedictions hover ; and the winds of night  
Move gently round the room, and watch you there.  
And through the dreadful hours  
The trees and waters and the hills have kept  
The sacred vigil while you slept,  
And lay a way of dew and flowers  
Where your feet, your morning feet, shall tread.  
And still the darkness ebbs about your bed.  
Quiet, and strange, and loving-kind, you sleep.  
And holy joy about the earth is shed ;  
And holiness upon the deep.

## FINDING

FROM the candles and dumb shadows,  
And the house where love had died,  
I stole to the vast moonlight  
And the whispering life outside.  
But I found no lips of comfort,  
No home in the moon's light  
(I, little and lone and frightened  
In the unfriendly night),  
And no meaning in the voices. . . .  
Far over the lands, and through  
The dark, beyond the ocean,  
I willed to think of *you* !  
For I knew, had you been with me  
I'd have known the words of night,  
Found peace of heart, gone gladly  
In comfort of that light.

Oh ! the wind with soft beguiling  
Would have stolen my thought away ;  
And the night, subtly smiling,  
Came by the silver way ;  
And the moon came down and danced to me,  
And her robe was white and flying ;  
And trees bent their heads to me  
Mysteriously crying ;  
And dead voices wept around me ;  
And dead soft fingers thrilled ;  
And the little gods whispered. . . .

But ever  
Desperately I willed ;  
Till all grew soft and far  
And silent . . .  
And suddenly  
I found you white and radiant,  
Sleeping quietly,  
Far out through the tides of darkness.  
And I there in that great light  
Was alone no more, nor fearful ;  
For there, in the homely night,  
Was no thought else that mattered,  
And nothing else was true,  
But the white fire of moonlight,  
And a white dream of you.

## SONG

"Oh! Love," they said, "is King of Kings,  
And Triumph is his crown.  
Earth fades in flame before his wings,  
And Sun and Moon bow down."—  
But that, I knew, would never do;  
And Heaven is all too high.  
So whenever I meet a Queen, I said,  
I will not catch her eye.

"Oh! Love," they said, and "Love," they said,  
"The gift of Love is this;  
A crown of thorns about thy head,  
And vinegar to thy kiss!"—  
But Tragedy is not for me;  
And I'm content to be gay.  
So whenever I spied a Tragic Lady,  
I went another way.

And so I never feared to see  
You wander down the street,  
Or come across the fields to me  
On ordinary feet.  
For what they'd never told me of,  
And what I never knew;  
It was that all the time, my love,  
Love would be merely you.

## THE VOICE

SAFE in the magic of my woods  
I lay, and watched the dying light.  
Faint in the pale high solitudes,  
And washed with rain and veiled by night,

Silver and blue and green were showing.  
And the dark woods grew darker still ;  
And birds were hushed ; and peace was growing ;  
And quietness crept up the hill ;

And no wind was blowing . . .

And I knew  
That this was the hour of knowing,  
And the night and the woods and you  
Were one together, and I should find  
Soon in the silence the hidden key  
Of all that had hurt and puzzled me—  
Why you were you, and the night was kind,  
And the woods were part of the heart of me.

And there I waited breathlessly,  
Alone ; and slowly the holy three,  
The three that I loved, together grew  
One, in the hour of knowing,  
Night, and the woods, and you—

And suddenly  
There was an uproar in my woods,

The noise of a fool in mock distress,  
Crashing and laughing and blindly going,  
Of ignorant feet and a swishing dress,  
And a Voice profaning the solitudes.

The spell was broken, the key denied me  
And at length your flat clear voice beside me  
Mouthed cheerful clear flat platitudes.

You came and quacked beside me in the wood.  
You said, "The view from here is very good!"  
You said, "It's nice to be alone a bit!"  
And, "How the days are drawing out!" you said.  
You said, "The sunset's pretty, isn't it?"

\* \* \* \* \*

By God! I wish—I wish that you were dead!

## DINING-ROOM TEA

WHEN you were there, and you, and you,  
Happiness crowned the night; I too,  
Laughing and looking, one of all,  
I watched the quivering lamplight fall  
On plate and flowers and pouring tea  
And cup and cloth; and they and we  
Flung all the dancing moments by  
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye  
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,  
Improvident, unmemoried;  
And fitfully and like a flame  
The light of laughter went and came.  
Proud in their careless transience moved  
The changing faces that I loved.

Till suddenly, and otherwhence,  
I looked upon your innocence.  
For lifted clear and still and strange  
From the dark woven flow of change  
Under a vast and starless sky  
I saw the immortal moment lie.  
One instant I, an instant, knew  
As God knows all. And it and you  
I, above Time, oh, blind! could see  
In witless immortality.  
I saw the marble cup; the tea,  
Hung on the air, an amber stream;  
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,



The painted flame, the frozen smoke.  
No more the flooding lamplight broke  
On flying eyes and lips and hair ;  
But lay, but slept unbroken there,  
On stiller flesh, and body breathless,  
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,  
And words on which no silence grew.  
Light was more alive than you.

For suddenly, and otherwhence,  
I looked on your magnificence.  
I saw the stillness and the light,  
And you, august, immortal, white,  
Holy and strange ; and every glint  
Posture and jest and thought and tint  
Freed from the mask of transiency,  
Triumphant in eternity,  
Immote, immortal.

Dazed at length  
Human eyes grew, mortal strength  
Wearied ; and Time began to creep.  
Change closed about me like a sleep.  
Light glinted on the eyes I loved.  
The cup was filled. The bodies moved.  
The drifting petal came to ground.  
The laughter chimed its perfect round.  
The broken syllable was ended.  
And I, so certain and so friended,

How could I cloud, or how distress,  
The heaven of your unconsciousness?  
Or shake at Time's sufficient spell,  
Stammering of lights unutterable?  
The eternal holiness of you,  
The timeless end, you never knew,  
The peace that lay, the light that shone.  
You never knew that I had gone  
A million miles away, and stayed  
A million years. The laughter played  
Unbroken round me; and the jest  
Flashed on. And we that knew the best  
Down wonderful hours grew happier yet.  
I sang at heart, and talked, and eat,  
And lived from laugh to laugh, I too,  
When you were there, and you, and you.

## THE GODDESS IN THE WOOD

IN a flowered dell the Lady Venus stood,  
Amazed with sorrow. Down the morning one  
Far golden horn in the gold of trees and sun  
Rang out; and held; and died. . . . She thought  
the wood  
Grew quieter. Wing, and leaf, and pool of light  
Forgot to dance. Dumb lay the unfalling stream;  
Life one eternal instant rose in dream  
Clear out of time, poised on a golden height. . . .

Till a swift terror broke the abrupt hour.  
The gold waves purled amidst the green above her;  
And a bird sang. With one sharp-taken breath,  
By sunlit branches and unshaken flower,  
The immortal limbs flashed to the human lover,  
And the immortal eyes to look on death.

## A CHANNEL PASSAGE

THE damned ship lurched and slithered. Quiet and quick

My cold gorge rose ; the long sea rolled ; I knew  
I must think hard of something, or be sick ;

And could think hard of only one thing—*you* !  
You, you alone could hold my fancy ever !

And with you memories come, sharp pain, and  
dole.

Now there's a choice—heartache or tortured liver !

'A sea-sick body, or a *you*-sick soul !

Do I forget you ? Retchings twist and tie me,

Old meat, good meals, brown gobbets, up I throw.

Do I remember ? Acrid return and slimy,

The sobs and slobber of a last year's woe.

And still the sick ship rolls. 'Tis hard, I tell ye,

To choose 'twixt love and nausea, heart and belly.

## VICTORY

ALL night the ways of Heaven were desolate,  
Long roads across a gleaming empty sky.  
Outcast and doomed and driven, you and I,  
Alone, serene beyond all love or hate,  
Terror or triumph, were content to wait,  
We, silent and all-knowing. Suddenly  
Swept through the heaven low-crouching from  
on high,  
One horseman, downward to the earth's low gate.

Oh, perfect from the ultimate height of living,  
Lightly we turned, through wet woods blossom-  
hung,  
Into the open. Down the supernal roads,  
With plumes a-tossing, purple flags far flung,  
Rank upon rank, unbridled, unforgiving,  
Thundered the black battalions of the Gods.

## DAY AND NIGHT

THROUGH my heart's palace Thoughts unnumbered  
throng ;

And there, most quiet and, as a child, most wise,  
High-throned you sit, and gracious. All day long  
Great Hopes gold-armoured, jester Fantasies,  
And pilgrim Dreams, and little beggar Sighs,  
Bow to your benediction, go their way.

And the grave jewelled courtier Memories  
Worship and love and tend you, all the day.

But, when I sleep, and all my thoughts go straying,  
When the high session of the day is ended,  
And darkness comes ; then, with the waning light,  
By liliated maidens on your way attended,  
Proud from the wonted throne, superbly swaying,  
You, like a queen, pass out into the night.



## EXPERIMENTS





## CHORIAMBICS—I.

AH ! not now, when desire burns, and the wind  
calls, and the suns of spring  
Light-foot dance in the woods, whisper of life,  
woo me to wayfaring :

Ah ! not now should you come, now when the  
road beckons, and good friends call,  
Where are songs to be sung, fights to be fought,  
yea ! and the best of all,

Love, on myriad lips fairer than yours, kisses you  
could not give ! . . .

Dearest, why should I mourn, whimper, and  
whine, I that have yet to live ?

Sorrow will I forget, tears for the best, love on  
the lips of you,

Now, when dawn in the blood wakes, and the  
sun laughs up the eastern blue ;

I'll forget and be glad !

Only at length, dear, when the great day  
ends,

When love dies with the last light, and the last  
song has been sung, and friends

All are perished, and gloom strides on the  
heaven : then, as alone I lie,

'Mid Death's gathering winds, frightened and  
dumb, sick for the past, may I

Feel you suddenly there, cool at my brow ; then  
may I hear the peace

Of your voice at the last, whispering love, calling,  
ere all can cease

In the silence of death ; then may I see dimly,  
and know, a space,  
Bending over me, last light in the dark, once, as  
of old, your face.

## CHORIAMBICS—II.

HERE the flame that was ash, shrine that was  
void, lost in the haunted wood,  
I have tended and loved, year upon year, I in the  
solitude  
Waiting, quiet and glad-eyed in the dark, know-  
ing that once a gleam  
Glowed and went through the wood. Still I  
abode strong in a golden dream,  
Unrecaptured.

For I, I that had faith, knew that  
a face would glance  
One day, white in the dim woods, and a voice  
call, and a radiance  
Fill the grove, and the fire suddenly leap . .  
and, in the heart of it,  
End of labouring, you! Therefore I kept ready  
the altar, lit  
The flame, burning apart.

Face of my dreams vainly in vision  
white  
Gleaming down to me, lo! hopeless I rise now.  
For about midnight  
Whispers grew through the wood suddenly,  
strange cries in the boughs above  
Grated, cries like a laugh. Silent and black then  
through the sacred grove  
Great birds flew, as a dream, troubling the leaves,  
passing at length.

I knew  
Long expected and long loved, that afar, God of  
the dim wood, you

Somewhere lay, as a child sleeping, a child  
suddenly reft from mirth,  
White and wonderful yet, white in your youth,  
stretched upon foreign earth,  
God, immortal and dead !

Therefore I go ; never to rest, or  
win .

Peace, and worship of you more, and the dumb  
wood and the shrine therein.

## DESERTION

So light we were, so right we were, so fair faith  
    shone,  
And the way was laid so certainly, that, when I'd  
    gone,  
What dumb thing looked up at you? Was it  
    something heard,  
Or a sudden cry, that meekly and without a word  
You broke the faith, and strangely, weakly,  
    slipped apart.  
You gave in—you, the proud of heart, unbowed  
    of heart !  
Was this, friend, the end of all that we could do?  
And have you found the best for you, the rest  
    for you ?  
Did you learn so suddenly (and I not by !)  
Some whispered story, that stole the glory from  
    the sky,  
And ended all the splendid dream, and made  
    you go  
So dully from the fight we know, the light we  
    know ?  
O faithless ! the faith remains, and I must pass  
Gay down the way, and on alone. Under the  
    grass  
You wait ; the breeze moves in the trees, and  
    stirs, and calls,  
And covers you with white petals, with light  
    petals.

There it shall crumble, frail and fair, under the  
sun,  
O little heart, your brittle heart ; till day be  
done,  
And the shadows gather, falling light, and, white  
with dew,  
Whisper, and weep ; and creep to you. Good  
sleep to you !

1905—1908





## SECOND BEST

HERE in the dark, O heart ;  
Alone with the enduring Earth, and Night,  
And Silence, and the warm strange smell of clover ;  
Clear-visioned, though it break you ; far apart  
From the dead best, the dear and old delight ;  
Throw down your dreams of immortality,  
O faithful, O foolish lover !

Here's peace for you, and surety ; here the one  
Wisdom—the truth !—" All day the good glad sun  
Showers love and labour on you, wine and song ;  
The greenwood laughs, the wind blows, all day long  
Till night." And night ends all things.

Then shall be  
No lamp relumed in heaven, no voices crying,  
Or changing lights, or dreams and forms that hover !  
(And, heart, for all your sighing,  
That gladness and those tears are over, over. . . .)

And has the truth brought no new hope at all,  
Heart, that you're weeping yet for Paradise ?  
Do they still whisper, the old weary cries ?

*" 'Mid youth and song, feasting and carnival,  
Through laughter, through the roses, as of old  
Comes Death, on shadowy and relentless feet,  
Death, unappeasable by prayer or gold ;  
Death is the end, the end !"*

Proud, then, clear-eyed and laughing, go to greet  
Death as a friend !

Exile of immortality, strongly wise,  
Strain through the dark with undesirous eyes  
To what may lie beyond it. Sets your star,  
O heart, for ever! Yet, behind the night,  
Waits for the great unborn, somewhere afar,  
Some white tremendous daybreak. And the light,  
Returning, shall give back the golden hours,  
Ocean a windless level, Earth a lawn  
Spacious and full of sunlit dancing-places,  
And laughter, and music, and, among the flowers,  
The gay child-hearts of men, and the child-faces  
O heart, in the great dawn!

## DAY THAT I HAVE LOVED

TENDERLY, day that I have loved, I close your  
eyes,  
And smooth your quiet brow, and fold your  
thin dead hands.  
The grey veils of the half-light deepen; colour  
dies.  
I bear you, a light burden, to the shrouded  
sands,

Where lies your waiting boat, by wreaths of the  
sea's making  
Mist-garlanded, with all grey weeds of the  
water crowned.  
There you'll be laid, past fear of sleep or hope  
of waking;  
And over the unmoving sea, without a sound,

Faint hands will row you outward, out beyond  
our sight,  
Us with stretched arms and empty eyes on  
the far-gleaming  
And marble sand. . . .  
Beyond the shifting cold twilight,  
Further than laughter goes, or tears, further  
than dreaming,

There'll be no port, no dawn-lit islands! But  
the drear

Waste darkening, and, at length, flame ultimate  
on the deep.

Oh, the last fire—and you, unkissed, unfriended  
there!

Oh, the lone way's red ending, and we not  
there to weep!

(We found you pale and quiet, and strangely  
crowned with flowers,

Lovely and secret as a child. You came  
with us,

Came happily, hand in hand with the young  
dancing hours,

High on the downs at dawn!) Void now  
and tenebrous,

The grey sands curve before me. . . .

From the inland meadows,  
Fragrant of June and clover, floats the dark,  
and fills

The hollow sea's dead face with little creeping  
shadows,

And the white silence brims the hollow of the  
hills.

Close in the nest is folded every weary wing,  
Hushed all the joyful voices, and we, who  
held you dear,  
Eastward we turn and homeward, alone, re-  
membering . . .  
Day that I loved, day that I loved, the Night  
is here!

## SLEEPING OUT: FULL MOON

THEY sleep within. . . .

I cower to the earth, I waking, I only.

High and cold thou dreamest, O queen, high-  
dreaming and lonely.

We have slept too long, who can hardly win  
The white one flame, and the night-long crying ;  
The viewless passers ; the world's low sighing  
With desire, with yearning,  
To the fire unburning,  
To the heatless fire, to the flameless ecstasy! . . .

Helpless I lie.

And around me the feet of thy watchers tread.

There is a rumour and a radiance of wings above  
my head,

An intolerable radiance of wings. . . .

All the earth grows fire,

White lips of desire

Brushing cool on the forehead, croon slumbrous  
things.

Earth fades ; and the air is thrilled with ways,  
Dewy paths full of comfort. And radiant bands,  
The gracious presence of friendly hands,  
Help the blind one, the glad one, who stumbles  
and strays,

Stretching wavering hands, up, up, through the  
praise

Of a myriad silver trumpets, through cries,  
To all glory, to all gladness, to the infinite  
height,  
To the gracious, the unmoving, the mother eyes,  
And the laughter, and the lips, of light.



## IN EXAMINATION

Lo ! from quiet skies  
In through the window my Lord the Sun!  
And my eyes  
Were dazzled and drunk with the misty gold,  
The golden glory that drowned and crowned me  
Eddied and swayed through the room . . .

Around me,

To left and to right,  
Hunched figures and old,  
Dull bleary-eyed scribbling fools, grew fair,  
Ringed round and haloed with holy light.  
Flame lit on their hair,  
And their burning eyes grew young and wise,  
Each as a God, or King of kings,  
White-robed and bright  
(Still scribbling all);  
And a full tumultuous murmur of wings  
Grew through the hall;  
And I knew the white undying Fire,  
And, through open portals,  
Gyre on gyre,  
Archangels and angels, adoring, bowing,  
And a Face unshaded . . .  
Till the light faded ;  
And they were but fools again, fools unknowing,  
Still scribbling, bleary-eyed and stolid immortals.

## PINE-TREES AND THE SKY: EVENING

I'd watched the sorrow of the evening sky,  
And smelt the sea, and earth, and the warm  
    clover,  
And heard the waves, and the seagull's mocking  
    cry.

And in them all was only the old cry,  
That song they always sing—"The best is over!  
You may remember now, and think, and sigh,  
O silly lover!"

And I was tired and sick that all was over,  
And because I,  
For all my thinking, never could recover  
One moment of the good hours that were over.  
And I was sorry and sick, and wished to die.

Then from the sad west turning wearily,  
I saw the pines against the white north sky,  
Very beautiful, and still, and bending over  
Their sharp black heads against a quiet sky.  
And there was peace in them; and I  
Was happy, and forgot to play the lover,  
And laughed, and did no longer wish to die;  
Being glad of you, O pine-trees and the sky!

## WAGNER

CREEPS in half wanton, half asleep,  
One with a fat wide hairless face.  
He likes love-music that is cheap;  
Likes women in a crowded place;  
And wants to hear the noise they're making.

His heavy eyelids droop half-over,  
Great pouches swing beneath his eyes.  
He listens, thinks himself the lover,  
Heaves from his stomach wheezy sighs;  
He likes to feel his heart's a-breaking.

The music swells. His gross legs quiver.  
His little lips are bright with slime.  
The music swells. The women shiver.  
And all the while, in perfect time,  
His pendulous stomach hangs a-shaking.

## THE VISION OF 'THE ARCHANGELS

SLOWLY up silent peaks, the white edge of the  
world,  
Trode four archangels, clear against the un-  
heeding sky,  
Bearing, with quiet even steps, and great wings  
furled,  
A little dingy coffin; where a child must  
lie,  
It was so tiny. (Yet, you had fancied, God  
could never  
Have bidden a child turn from the spring and  
the sunlight,  
And shut him in that lonely shell, to drop for  
ever  
Into the emptiness and silence, into the  
night. . . .)

They then from the sheer summit cast, and  
watched it fall,  
Through unknown glooms, that frail black  
coffin—and therein  
God's little pitiful Body lying, worn and thin,  
And curled up like some crumpled, lonely flower-  
petal—  
Till it was no more visible; then turned again  
With sorrowful quiet faces downward to the  
plain.

## SEASIDE

SWIFTLY out from the friendly lilt of the band,  
The crowd's good laughter, the loved eyes of men,  
I am drawn nightward; I must turn again  
Where, down beyond the low untrodden strand,  
There curves and glimmers outward to the unknown

The old unquiet ocean All the shade  
Is rife with magic and movement. I stray alone  
Here on the edge of silence, half afraid,

Waiting a sign. In the deep heart of me  
The sullen waters swell towards the moon,  
And all my tides set seaward.

From inland  
Leaps a gay fragment of some mocking tune,  
That tinkles and laughs and fades along the sand,  
And dies between the seawall and the sea.

# ON THE DEATH OF SMET-SMET, THE HIPPOPOTAMUS-GODDESS

SONG OF A TRIBE OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

*(The Priests within the Temple)*

SHE was wrinkled and huge and hideous ? She  
was our Mother.

She was lustful and lewd ?—but a God ; we had  
none other.

In the day She was hidden and dumb, but at  
nightfall moaned in the shade ;

We shuddered and gave Her Her will in the  
darkness ; we were afraid.

*(The People without)*

*She sent us pain,  
And we bowed before Her ;  
She smiled again  
And bade us adore Her.  
She solaced our woe  
And soothed our sighing ;  
And what shall we do  
Now God is dying ?*

*(The Priests within)*

She was hungry and ate our children ;—how  
should we stay Her ?

She took our young men and our maidens ;—  
ours to obey Her.

We were loathèd and mocked and reviled of all  
nations ; that was our pride.  
She fed us, protected us, loved us, and killed us ;  
now She has died.

*(The People without)*

*She was so strong ;  
But Death is stronger.  
She ruled us long ;  
But Time is longer.  
She solaced our woe  
And soothed our sighing ;  
And what shall we do  
Now God is dying ?*

## THE SONG OF THE PILGRIMS

*(Halted around the fire by night, after moon-set, they  
sing this beneath the trees.)*

WHAT light of unremembered skies  
Hast thou relumed within our eyes,  
Thou whom we seek, whom we shall find? . . .  
A certain odour on the wind,  
Thy hidden face beyond the west,  
These things have called us ; on a quest  
Older than any road we trod,  
More endless than desire. . . .

Far God,  
Sigh with thy cruel voice, that fills  
The soul with longing for dim hills  
And faint horizons ! For there come  
Grey moments of the antient dumb  
Sickness of travel, when no song  
Can cheer us ; but the way seems long ;  
And one remembers. . . .

Ah ! the beat  
Of weary unreturning feet,  
And songs of pilgrims unreturning ! . . .  
The fires we left are always burning  
On the old shrines of home. Our kin  
Have built them temples, and therein  
Pray to the Gods we know ; and dwell  
In little houses lovable,  
Being happy (we remember how !)  
And peaceful even to death. . . .



O Thou,  
God of all long desirous roaming,  
Our hearts are sick of fruitless homing,  
And crying after lost desire.  
Hearten us onward ! as with fire  
Consuming dreams of other bliss.  
The best Thou givest, giving this  
Sufficient thing—to travel still  
Over the plain, beyond the hill,  
Unhesitating through the shade,  
Amid the silence unafraid,  
Till, at some sudden turn, one sees  
Against the black and muttering trees  
Thine altar, wonderfully white,  
Among the Forests of the Night.

## THE SONG OF THE BEASTS

*(Sung, on one night, in the cities, in the darkness.)*

COME away! Come away!

Ye are sober and dull through the common  
day,

But now it is night!

It is shameful night, and God is asleep!

(Have you not felt the quick fires that creep  
Through the hungry flesh, and the lust of  
delight,

And hot secrets of dreams that day cannot  
say?). . .

. . . The house is dumb;

The night calls out to you. . . . Come, ah,  
come!

Down the dim stairs, through the creaking door,  
Naked, crawling on hands and feet

—It is meet! it is meet!

Ye are men no longer, but less and more,

Beast and God. . . . Down the lampless street,

By little black ways, and secret places,

In darkness and mire,

Faint laughter around, and evil faces

By the star-glint seen—ah! follow with us!

For the darkness whispers a blind desire,

And the fingers of night are amorous. . . .

Keep close as we speed,

Though mad whispers woo you, and hot hands  
cling,  
And the touch and the smell of bare flesh sting,  
Soft flank by your flank, and side brushing side—  
*To-night* never heed !  
Unswerving and silent follow with me,  
Till the city ends sheer,  
And the crook'd lanes open wide,  
Out of the voices of night,  
Beyond lust and fear,  
To the level waters of moonlight,  
To the level waters, quiet and clear,  
To the black unresting plains of the calling sea.

## FAILURE

BECAUSE God put His adamantine fate  
Between my sullen heart and its desire,  
I swore that I would burst the Iron Gate,  
Rise up, and curse Him on His throne of fire.  
Earth shuddered at my crown of blasphemy,  
But Love was as a flame about my feet ;  
Proud up the Golden Stair I strode ; and beat  
Thrice on the Gate, and entered with a cry—

All the great courts were quiet in the sun,  
And full of vacant echoes : moss had grown  
Over the glassy pavement, and begun  
To creep within the dusty council-halls.  
An idle wind blew round an empty throne  
And stirred the heavy curtains on the walls.

## ANTE ARAM

BEFORE thy shrine I kneel, an unknown wor-  
shipper,  
Chanting strange hymns to thee and sorrowful  
litanies,  
Incense of dirges, prayers that are as holy myrrh.

Ah! goddess, on thy throne of tears and faint  
low sighs,  
Weary at last to theeward come the feet that  
err,  
And empty hearts grown tired of the world's  
vanities.

How fair this cool deep silence to a wanderer  
Deaf with the roar of winds along the open  
skies!  
Sweet, after sting and bitter kiss of sea-water,

The pale Lethean wine within thy chalices! . .  
*I* come before thee, I, too tired wanderer  
To heed the horror of the shrine, the distant  
cries,

And evil whispers in the gloom, or the swift  
whirr  
Of terrible wings—I, least of all thy votaries,  
With a faint hope to see the scented darkness  
stir,

And, parting, frame within its quiet mysteries  
One face, with lips than autumn-lilies tenderer,  
And voice more sweet than the far plaint of viols  
is,

Or the soft moan of any grey-eyed lute-player.

## DAWN

*(From the train between Bologna and Milan, second class.)*

OPPOSITE me two Germans snore and sweat.

Through sullen swirling gloom we jolt and roar  
We have been here for ever : even yet

A dim watch tells two hours, two aeons, more.  
The windows are tight-shut and slimy-wet

With a night's foetor. There are two hours  
more ;

Two hours to dawn and Milan ; two hours yet.

Opposite me two Germans sweat and snore. . . .

One of them wakes, and spits, and sleeps again.

The darkness shivers. A wan light through the  
rain

Strikes on our faces, drawn and white. Some-  
where

A new day sprawls ; and, inside, the foul air  
Is chill, and damp, and fouler than before. . . .

Opposite me two Germans sweat and snore.

## THE CALL

Out of the nothingness of sleep,  
The slow dreams of Eternity,  
There was a thunder on the deep :  
I came, because you called to me.

I broke the Night's primeval bars,  
I dared the old abysmal curse,  
And flashed through ranks of frightened stars  
Suddenly on the universe !

The eternal silences were broken ;  
Hell became Heaven as I passed.—  
What shall I give you as a token,  
A sign that we have met, at last ?

I'll break and forge the stars anew,  
Shatter the heavens with a song ;  
Immortal in my love for you,  
Because I love you, very strong.

Your mouth shall mock the old and wise,  
Your laugh shall fill the world with flame,  
I'll write upon the shrinking skies  
The scarlet splendour of your name,

Till Heaven cracks, and Hell thereunder  
Dies in her ultimate mad fire,  
And darkness falls, with scornful thunder,  
On dreams of men and men's desire.



Then only in the empty spaces,  
Death, walking very silently,  
Shall fear the glory of our faces  
Through all the dark infinity.

So, clothed about with perfect love,  
The eternal end shall find us one,  
Alone above the Night, above  
The dust of the dead gods, alone.

## THE WAYFARERS

Is it the hour? We leave this resting-place  
Made fair by one another for a while.  
Now, for a god-speed, one last mad embrace;  
The long road then, unlit by your faint smile.  
Ah! the long road! and you so far away!  
Oh, I'll remember! but . . . each crawling day  
Will pale a little your scarlet lips, each mile  
Dull the dear pain of your remembered face.

. . . Do you think there's a far border town,  
somewhere,  
The desert's edge, last of the lands we know,  
Some gaunt eventual limit of our light,  
In which I'll find you waiting; and we'll go  
Together, hand in hand again, out there,  
Into the waste we know not, into the night?

## THE BEGINNING

SOME day I shall rise and leave my friends  
And seek you again through the world's far ends,  
You whom I found so fair,  
(Touch of your hands and smell of your hair !),  
My only god in the days that were.  
My eager feet shall find you again,  
Though the sullen years and the mark of pain  
Have changed you wholly ; for I shall know  
(How could I forget having loved you so ?),  
In the sad half-light of evening,  
The face that was all my sunrising.  
So then at the ends of the earth I'll stand  
And hold you fiercely by either hand,  
And seeing your age and ashen hair  
I'll curse the thing that once you were,  
Because it is changed and pale and old  
(Lips that were scarlet, hair that was gold !),  
And I loved you before you were old and wise,  
When the flame of youth was strong in your  
eyes,  
—And my heart is sick with memories.





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